

**SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PROVIDING COMPONENTIZED
TRANSPORTS AND FORMS**

Field of the Invention

5 The present invention relates generally to computer-executable software, and more particularly to sending a message across multiple transport protocols.

Background of the Invention

Consumer electronics of almost any size now include controllers or processors and perform many functions that used to be exclusively within the domain of the desktop computer. One such device, the cellular phone, previously dedicated to transmitting only voice communication, is now being utilized to transmit other data in addition to voice communication. Some cellular phones now allow users to connect to the Internet and browse web sites; other cellular phones now allow users to check and send email. However, power consumption and available memory, place size and resource constraints on mobile devices, such as cellular phones, that do not exist on desktop computers.

10 The traditional model of building monolithic applications for the desktop world creates difficulties when adapted to mobile computing. Until now, the size and resource constraints of mobile devices have made an acceptable communications mechanism unascertainable to the developers of mobile communications.

15 The present invention provides a system and method for managing communication messages on a mobile device with a group of interactive and modularized components. The invention provides an email application for mobile devices that heretofore had been integrated and non-extensible, allowing them to become modular and extensible. The resultant communication system allows easy accessorizing by developers. Furthermore, the invention provides a method for centrally controlling data flow throughout the communication system.

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Summary of the Invention

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In one aspect of the invention, an application is in communication with a data storage component, a message form, a transport, and a data store. The application, the message form and the transport each communicate using a standardized set of Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) to pass information back and forth. The standardized set of APIs enables developers the flexibility to create modularized components for performing specialized functions of the communication system, thereby avoiding the monolithic approach to application development. In this way, the communication system may be more easily tailored for specific applications without unduly burdening the limited resources of a mobile device.

The invention simplifies controlling a messaging system by dividing particular functionality among several components rather than integrating all the functionality in a single component. In addition, each component can use the standardized set of APIs to communicate. These simplifications improve the ability of outside vendors to add new components to the system.

Brief Description of the Drawings

FIGURE 1 is a functional block diagram illustrating functional components of a mobile computing device that may be adapted to implement one embodiment of the present invention.

FIGURE 2 is a functional block diagram illustrating a system adapted to organize and distribute messages.

FIGURE 3 is a functional block diagram illustrating a subsystem of the system illustrated in FIGURE 2, including a mail application and message form, and focusing on the relationship of these two components, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

FIGURE 4 is a functional block diagram illustrating a subsystem of the system illustrated in FIGURE 2, including a mail application and a transport component, and focusing on the relationship of these two components, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

FIGURE 5 is a functional block diagram illustrating the evaluation of a message and the instantiation of the appropriate form by the mail application according to one embodiment of the present invention.

FIGURE 6 is a logical flow diagram illustrating a process for accessing a registry to identify a proper form to handle a message class, in accordance with one

5 implementation of the present invention.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiment

The present invention provides a system and method for facilitating the management of messages within an electronic device. Among other things, disclosed is

10 a system that standardizes the interaction of components of a mobile device messaging system. The system allows the mobile device messaging system to be modular and extensible. This system is beneficial in a reduced memory capacity environment.

Illustrative Operating Environment

FIGURE 1 is a functional block diagram illustrating functional

15 components of a mobile computing device 100. The mobile computing device 100 has a processor 160, a memory 162, a display 128, and a keypad 132. The memory 162 generally includes both volatile memory (*e.g.*, RAM) and non-volatile memory (*e.g.*, ROM, Flash Memory, or the like). The mobile computing device 100 includes an operating system 164, such as the Windows CE operating system from Microsoft

20 Corporation or other operating system, which is resident in the memory 162 and executes on the processor 160. The keypad 132 may be a push button numeric dialing pad (such as on a typical telephone), a multi-key keyboard (such as a conventional keyboard), or other such input device, which would function in the required fashion. The display 128 may be a liquid crystal display, or any other type of display commonly

25 used in mobile computing devices. The display 128 may be touch sensitive, and would then also act as an input device.

One or more application programs 166 are loaded into memory 162 and run on the operating system 164. Examples of application programs include phone dialer programs, email programs, scheduling programs, PIM (personal information

management) programs, word processing programs, spreadsheet programs, Internet browser programs, and so forth. The mobile computing device 100 also includes non-volatile storage 168 within the memory 162. The non-volatile storage 168 may be used to store persistent information which should not be lost if the mobile computing device 100 is powered down. The applications 166 may use and store information in the storage 168, such as e-mail or other messages used by an e-mail application, contact information used by a PIM, appointment information used by a scheduling program, documents used by a word processing application, and the like. A synchronization application also resides on the mobile device and is programmed to interact with a corresponding synchronization application resident on a host computer to keep the information stored in the storage 168 synchronized with corresponding information stored at the host computer.

The mobile computing device 100 has a power supply 170, which may be implemented as one or more batteries. The power supply 170 might further include an external power source, such as an AC adapter or a powered docking cradle that supplements or recharges the batteries.

The mobile computing device 100 is also shown with two types of external notification mechanisms: an LED 140 and an audio interface 174. These devices may be directly coupled to the power supply 170 so that when activated, they remain on for a duration dictated by the notification mechanism even though the processor 160 and other components might shut down to conserve battery power. The LED 140 may be programmed to remain on indefinitely until the user takes action to indicate the powered-on status of the device. The audio interface 174 is used to provide audible signals to and receive audible signals from the user. For example, the audio interface 174 may be coupled to a speaker for providing audible output and to a microphone for receiving audible input, such as to facilitate a telephone conversation.

The mobile computing device 100 also includes a radio 172 that performs the function of transmitting and receiving radio frequency communications. The radio 172 facilitates wireless connectivity between the mobile computing device 100 and the outside world, via a communications carrier or service provider.

Transmissions to and from the radio 172 are conducted under control of the operating system 164. In other words, communications received by the radio 172 may be disseminated to application programs 166 via the operating system 164, and vice versa.

Illustrative Message Organizing System

5 FIGURE 2 is a functional block diagram illustrating a system 200 adapted to organize and distribute messages within a mobile device, according to one embodiment of the invention. Messaging system 200 includes message store 210, data store 220, transport component 230, mail application 240, and form component 250.

10 Message store 210 is a software component, which acts as a mapping layer between components of a first message format (e.g., MAPI) and components of a second message format (e.g., Windows CE Database format). Additionally, the message store acts as a principal notifier to the other components of events that occur in system 200. Data store 220 is a software component which acts as a storage area for data in the system. Data store 220 may include a local mail store, a local contacts store, and the like. The data store 220 receives and stores message data from the message store 210.

15 Transport component 230 is illustrated in detail in FIGURE 4, and described below. Briefly described, transport component 230 includes several specialized message transports, each programmed to communicate with local components in MAPI format, and with external devices via particular protocols (e.g., SMS, SMTP, FAX, etc.). Transport component 230 includes transports 231, 232, and 233. Although only three transports are shown, it will be understood that more transports could be added or transports could be removed without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. For example, SMS transport 231 is a software component, interfaced to receive messages in SMS format. SMTP transport 232 is another software component interfaced to transmit messages in SMTP format. Additional transports 233 might be interfaced to receive any of several different communication formats such as, for example, fax data transmission, POP3, IMAP, or the like.

Mail application 240 is illustrated in detail in FIGURE 3 and 4, and described below. Briefly described, mail application 240 is an application software component that acts as a principal interface between the user and the system. The mail application 240 is programmed to control a special function, such as e-mail usage or contacts maintenance. As shown, the mail application 240 interacts with the message store 210, the message forms 250, and the transports 230. It should be noted that while the user primarily interfaces with the messaging system 200 through the mail application 240, there may be numerous applications running concurrently with the input component, such as, a word processor, calendar, etc. These other applications are not detailed here, as they are not pertinent to the present invention, as it exists in its present form, although they may support it or be supported by it presently or in the future.

Form component 250 is illustrated in detail in FIGURE 3, and described below. The form component 250 includes forms 251, 252, and 253. Although only three forms are shown, it will be understood that more forms could be added or forms could be removed without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Briefly described, the form component 250 is a group of special display forms that each perform a specialized function with respect to displaying messages. In other words, each form is a software component that may be programmed to either display information for or to receive information from the user. For instance, SMS form 251 allows the viewer to receive and to view messages in SMS format. Likewise, internet mail form 252 is a message form that allows the user to receive and to view internet messages. Similarly, meeting request form 253 allows the user to receive and view meeting requests. Additional forms might represent any number of different forms that may be instantiated by the input component 240 such as, for example, fax message, deleted messages, or the like.

Each of the several components, except the data store 220, communicate with each other using a standardized set of messaging interfaces, such as MAPI or a subset of MAPI. The several standardized interfaces are specified below in conjunction with a discussion of the particular interface. These features provide the advantage of

reducing the duplication of resource and simplifying the development of additional modules, which helps conserve space.

FIGURE 3 is a functional block diagram illustrating a subsystem 300 of system 200 including mail application 240 and message form 250, and focusing on the relationship of these two components. Mail application 240 includes interfaces, which it exposes to the message form 250 to allow message form 250 to communicate instructions to mail application 240. Although only a single interface is shown, it will be understood that more interfaces could be added without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Each interface includes several methods, of which each performs a specific operation. When a message form 250 calls an interface, the mail application 240 executes the identified method.

In a preferred embodiment, mail component 240 exposes an IMessageFormHost interface 341. The IMessageFormHost interface 341 includes methods that allow it to fulfill the aforementioned actions. The IMessageFormHost interface 341, and its methods, are generally described through the following pseudocode:

```
class IMessageFormHost
{
public:
    virtual HRESULT GetParentHWND(HWND* phwnd) _PURE;

    enum eMsgStatus {
        eNotAvailable = 0,
        eSent = 1,
        ePostponed = 2,
        eDelete = 3,
        eDeletePermanently = 4
    };
    virtual HRESULT FormClosing(IMessageForm* pform,
        IMessage* pMsg, eMsgStatus eMsgStat) _PURE;

    // This host method is the same one provided as part of IMailSyncCallBack.
    MAPIMETHOD(GetGlobalSetting)(LPCWSTR pszSetting, LPSPropValue pval)
    _PURE;
    MAPIMETHOD(SetGlobalSetting)(LPCWSTR pszSetting, LPSPropValue pval)
```

_PURE;

```
enum actions {
    actNull = 0,
    actFirst = 0,
    actReplyTo = 1,
    actReplyToAll = 2,
    actForward = 3,
    actDelete = 4,
    actClose = 5,
    actMoveToFolder = 6,
    actGotoNextMessage = 7,
    actGotoPrevMessage = 8,
    actComposeNew = 9,
    actGetFullMessage = 10,
    actViewAttachment = 11,
    actReplyWith = 12,
    actShow = 13,
    actLast
};

virtual HRESULT DoAction(IMessageForm* pform, IMessage* pmsg,
    actions act, LPARAM lParam) _PURE;
virtual HRESULT CreateNewMessage(IMessage** ppmsg) _PURE;
};
```

The methods above allow message form 250 to communicate several different instructions to mail application 240. For instance, one method listed above, FormClosing, allows message form 250 to tell mail application 240 that the form is closing. This allows mail application 240 to prepare to be the foreground window again, and also to release any handles to message form 250 that is closing.

Methods GetGlobalSettings and SetGlobalSettings allow message form 250 to determine settings, such as whether or not to include the original text of a message when replying. The DoAction method allows message form 250 to tell the mail application to do something (see above pseudocode, including enumerators). Message form 250 can use this method to forward a message, reply to it, go to the next message in the list mail application 240 is displaying, etc. Message form 250 can also request that the application create a new mail message.

Message form 250 also exposes a standardized set of interfaces. Although only two interfaces are shown, it will be understood that more interfaces could be added to or interfaces could be removed from message form 250 without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Each interface includes several
5 methods, of which each performs a specific operation, any of which may be the reason the interface is called.

In this embodiment, message form 250 includes IMessageForm interface 351 and IFormProvider interface 352. The IMessageForm interface 351 is generally described by the following pseudocode:

```

10 class IMessageForm : public IUnknown
   {
   public:
15     MAPIMETHOD(Activate) (
        ) _PURE;

        MAPIMETHOD(ShowForm) (
            ULONG ulAction
20         ) _PURE;

        MAPIMETHOD(SetMessage) (
            WORD          wType,
            LPMESSAGE     pmsg
25         ) _PURE;

        MAPIMETHOD(CloseForm) (
            BOOL fSave=FALSE
30         ) _PURE;

        MAPIMETHOD(PreTranslateMsg) (
            MSG* pmsg,
            BOOL* pfProcessed      // Set TRUE if the message taken
35         ) _PURE;

        MAPIMETHOD(GetActiveMessage) (
            LPMESSAGE* ppmsg
40         ) _PURE;

        MAPIMETHOD(OnMessageModified) (
            ULONG          cbId,
            LPENTRYID      pid,
            LPSPPropTagArray props
45         ) _PURE;

        MAPIMETHOD(SetCaptionText) (LPCWSTR psz
        ) _PURE;

};

```

The methods above allow mail application 240 to communicate several different instructions to message form 250. For example, Activate() method allows the mail application 240 to tell the message form 250 to "take control" of the device, that is,
 5 it will become the active "window", accepting all keyboard input.

Another method is ShowForm(), which is used by the mail application 240 to tell the message form 250 to make itself visible or not visible depending on the parameter passed to it. In one actual embodiment ShowForm() accepts the same parameters as the Win32 ShowWindow() API.

10 Yet another method is SetMessage(), which is used to set the message object that the message form 250 is to display. In one actual embodiment, once a form is displayed on the screen, this method can be used to switch the message that is being displayed to the user, without having to create a new form. This results in a significant reduction in resources and a corresponding increase in performance. Also,
 15 SetMessage() is used to set the initial message object that a message form 250 is to display.

Still another method is CloseForm(), which is used to tell a message form to close or exit. The method PreTranslateMsg() is used to help with keyboard accelerators, for example, in the Win32 environment.

20 Yet another method is GetActiveMessage(), which is used to determine the message object that a message form 250 is currently displaying.

Still yet another method is SetCaptionText(), which allows the mail application 240 to override the text on the title or task bar of the device. This exists mainly for the implementation on the Smart Phone, but isn't critical to the idea of the
 25 invention

The IFormProvider interface 352 is exposed by a message form 250 dynamic link library (DLL). It primarily performs the function of determining the icon to illustrate in the "message list" of the mail application. Additionally, IFormProvider interface 352 creates read forms and compose forms, both of which are members of the
 30 message form group 250 of special display forms discussed above. The IFormProvider interface 352 is generally described by the following pseudocode:

```

class IFormProvider : public IUnknown
{
5   public:

        enum FORMTYPE {
            kfNewMsg = 0,
            kfReply = 1,
            kfReplyToAll = 2,
10         kfForward = 3,
            kfLoad = 4,
            kfReplyWith = 5
        };

15     MAPIMETHOD(GetMsgStatusIconIndex) (
            LPMAPIFOLDER    pfldr,      // Folder for message
            LPENTRYID       pid,        // Id of message
            ULONG           cbid,       // count of bytes for the id
20         ULONG           ffflags,    // Flags for the message
            ULONG           ffstatus,   // Status for the message
            LPCWSTR         pszMsgClass,
            ULONG           cAttachments,
            ULONG*          pnIndex     // OUT: Idx for correct glyph
25     ) _PURE;

        MAPIMETHOD(ComposeMessageForm) (
            IMessageFormHost* phost,
            LPMESSAGE        pmsg,      // Object to compose
            IMessageForm**   ppForm,    // Form object
30         BOOL             fDeleteOnClose, // TRUE if we delete pmsg
                                     //when the user cancels.
            WORD             wIdType,    // Reply, Reply All, Forward
            LPMESSAGE        pMsgBase,   // Message to prefill the form
                                     //if necessary
35         LPARAM           lParam      // Extra data allowing Read
                                     //forms to pass info
                                     //to new compose form.
        ) _PURE;

40     MAPIMETHOD(CreateReadForm) (
            IMessageFormHost* pHost,
            IMessageForm**   ppForm,
            LPMESSAGE        pmsg
45     ) _PURE;
};

```

Mail application 240 calls the IFormProvider interface 352 and its associated methods to communicate a requirement to message form 250. Methods called include GetActiveMessage(), to determine the message object that a form is

currently displaying, and SetCaptionText(), allowing the mail application 240 to override the text on the title or task bar of the device.

Another method is GetMsgStatusIconIndex, which is used by the mail application 240 to determine the icon that is placed in the list of messages that mail application 240 presents. This allows customizable icons in the list of messages. (i.e. Meeting Requests would get a different icon than regular messages).

Yet another method, ComposeMessageForm(), is used to request a new compose form object from the message form 250. This method creates a new ImessageForm object that would allow editing or modifying the message object passed to it. In one actual embodiment, the form is not visible after creation. The mail application 240, after creating the form, calls the ImessageForm::ShowForm() method to make the new form visible. Still yet another method is CreateReadForm(), which is used to create a new message form for reading messages.

FIGURE 4 is a functional block diagram illustrating a subsystem 400 of system 200 including mail application 240 and transport component 230, and focusing on the relationship of these two components. Mail application 240 exposes interfaces that allow transport component 230 to communicate instructions to mail application 240. Additionally, although only a single interface is shown, it will be understood that more interfaces could be added without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

In a preferred embodiment, mail application 240 includes IMailSyncCallback interface 441, generally described in the following pseudocode.

```
class IMailSyncCallback : public IUnknown
{
public:
    MAPIMETHOD(RequestSync)(
        LPCWSTR pszProfile,
        DWORD cbCookie,
        LPBYTE pbCookie
    ) _PURE;

    MAPIMETHOD(Progress)(
        LPCWSTR pszProfile,
        SYNCPROGRESSITEM* pinfo
    ) _PURE;
```

```

5      MAPIMETHOD(GetGlobalSetting) (
        LPCWSTR pszSetting,
        LPSPropValue pval
        ) _PURE;

10     MAPIMETHOD_(UINT, DisplayMessageBox) (
        LPCWSTR pszProfile,
        LPCWSTR pszTitle,
        LPCWSTR pszMessage,
        UINT nFlags
        ) _PURE;

15     MAPIMETHOD(RequestCredentials) (
        LPCWSTR pszProfile,
        SYNCCREDENTIALS* ppcredsSource,
        SYNCCREDENTIALS** ppcreds
        ) _PURE;

20     MAPIMETHOD(LogEvent) (
        TRANSPORTEVENT* pevt
        ) _PURE;

25     MAPIMETHOD(AllocateMem) (
        DWORD cbSize,
        LPBYTE* ppb
        ) _PURE;

30     MAPIMETHOD(FreeMem) (
        LPVOID pvmem
        ) _PURE;

};

```

Transport component 230 (such as IMAP or POP) uses the IMailSyncCallback interface 441 to inform the mail application 240 of status changes and progress. Additionally, the IMailSyncCallback interface 441 can be used to report errors or events which occur, to the mail application 240, allowing the mail application 240 to display the error or event. Transport component 230 may also use the IMailSyncCallback interface 441 to request that a message be displayed to the user of the mail application 240.

Further, transport component 230 may use the IMailSyncCallback interface 441 to request authentication credentials from the mail application 240 for an account. This request allows the mail application 240 to be a common clearing house and safe repository of account data, freeing the transport component 230 of this responsibility. Additionally, the IMailSyncCallback interface 441 can be used to

request global messaging settings as well as to allocate and free shared memory buffers between transport component 230 and mail application 240.

In this embodiment, the transport component 230 exposes an ImailSyncCallHandler interface 441, described by the following pseudocode.

```
5
class IMailSyncHandler : public IUnknown
{
public:
10     MAPIMETHOD(Initialize)(
        IMailSyncCallBack* pCallBack,
        LPCWSTR pszProfileName,
        IMsgStore* pMsgStore
        ) _PURE;

15     MAPIMETHOD(ShutDown)(
        DWORD dwReserved
        ) _PURE;

20     MAPIMETHOD(Synchronize)(
        MAILEXCHANGEREQUEST* pRqst
        ) _PURE;

25     MAPIMETHOD(DoProperties)(
        HWND hwndParent
        ) _PURE;

30     MAPIMETHOD(GetCapability)(
        LPCWSTR pszName,
        LPSPROPVALUE pval
        ) _PURE;

35     MAPIMETHOD(SetCapability)(
        LPCWSTR pszName,
        LPSPROPVALUE pval
        ) _PURE;

40     MAPIMETHOD(Install)(
        LPCWSTR pszProfileName,
        LPCWSTR pszIncomingServer,
        LPCWSTR pszOutgoingServer,
        GUID* pidNetwork
        ) _PURE;

45     MAPIMETHOD(UnInstall)(
        ) _PURE;

50     MAPIMETHOD(DecodeEvent)(
        TRANSPORT_EVENT* pevt,
        LPWSTR* ppszEvent
        ) _PURE;
```

```

    MAPIMETHOD(GetFolderHierarchy) (
        FOLDERNODE** ppRootNode
    ) _PURE;

5      enum FOLDEROPTIONS {
        koptNA = 0,
        koptDownload,
        koptQueryDownload,
        koptGetRemotePath,
10      koptCreate,
        koptQueryCreate,
        koptSetAge,
        koptSetBodyFetchSize,
        koptSetAttachFetchSize,
15      koptGetAge,
        koptGetBodyFetchSize,
        koptGetAttachFetchSize,
    };

20      MAPIMETHOD(SetFolderOptions) (
        IMAPIFolder*    pfldr,
        FOLDERNODE*     pNode,
        FOLDEROPTIONS    opts,
        LPSPropValue     pval
25      ) _PURE;

        MAPIMETHOD(Connect) (
            DWORD dwReserved,
            SYNCCREDENTIALS* pCredentials
30      ) _PURE;

        MAPIMETHOD(Disconnect) (
            DWORD dwReserved
35      ) _PURE;
    };

```

Mail application 240 calls the IMailSyncHandler::Install() method when installing a new instance of a transport. This method allows the new instance of the transport, to set up any initial registry settings or to create any files necessary for the new instance of the transport. In one actual embodiment, a "profile name" can be

40 passed in the pszProfile parameter, which allows multiple instances of a transport. In practice, this is done to allow, for example, the IMAP transport to be installed twice, once for your corporate mail account, and once for a personel mail account. In this actual implementation of the IMailSyncHandler interface, the profile name is specified

45 in conjunction with Install(), Uninstall(), and Initiliaze() methods for maintaining several instances of a transport. Also when a transport talks back to the application via

the IMailSyncCallback interface, the transport specifies its profile name, so that the application knows the context of the request relative to the transport making the function call (request).

Mail application 240 calls IMailSyncHandler::UnInstall() method when
5 removing an instance of a transport. When called, IMailSyncHandler::UnInstall()
method removes any values from the registry, and/or removes any mail that the
transport may have created, from the mail store.

IMailSyncHandler::Initialize() method is used when any transport of
transport component 230 is loaded. Mail application 240 calls this method to initialize
10 a transport. Another method, the MailSyncHandler::SetCapability() method, is used to
modify the behavior of an instance of a transport. For example, mail application 240
might use this method to change the date range of messages that the transport would
acquire from the server. Yet another method, IMailSyncHandler::GetCapability()
method, is used to query a transport setting or capability.

15 Still another method, IMailSyncHandler::Connect() method, is used to
instruct the transport to connect to the mail server. IMailSyncHandler::Disconnect()
method is used to instruct a transport to disconnect from the mail server. The
IMailSyncHandler::Synchronize() method may be used to instruct a transport to
synchronize the local mail store against the remote mail server. The
20 MailSyncHanlder::DecodeEvent() method is used by the application to decode an event
that transport component 230 has logged to the mail application 240 with
IMailSyncCallback::LogEvent() method. In operation, IMailSyncCallback::LogEvent()
method allows a transport to log a small packet of data with mail application 240. Mail
application 240 would use a DecodeEvent() method to get a human readable
25 description of the event.

The IMailSyncHandler::GetFolderHierarchy() method, allows querying
the folder hierarchy of the remote mail server. Finally, the
IMailSyncHandler::SetFolderOptions() method allows setting and querying sync
options for folders on the remote mail server.

The above listed code and descriptions are not intended to be exhaustive in nature but are merely intended to clarify specific portions of the present invention and assist in enabling one having ordinary skill in the art to practice the invention.

FIGURE 5 is a functional block diagram conceptually illustrating a process the mail application 240 uses to determine a proper form, to instantiate based on message 500. Form 550 represents one instance of any form within the group of forms 250, including a default form for situations where a specific form is not requested or where a requested form cannot be provided.

Message 500 is a communication message, such as an e-mail message, stored on the mobile device 100. The message 500 includes a class property 510 as well as additional message properties 520. The class property 510 is an object including a property name field 511 and a value field 512. For example, property name field 511 might be PR_MESSAGE_CLASS, which identifies the property, while the corresponding value field 512 might be a text string describing the class of the message. An example of one particular message class might be IPM.MEETINGREQUEST.ACCEPT.

The registry 530 is a registration database containing, among numerous other things, pertinent information relating to the forms of form component 250 registered in the system. The registry 530 includes entries that associate particular message classes with a registered form to handle messages of that particular class. For example, as shown in FIGURE 5, Form "A" is registered to handle the IPM.MEETINGREQUEST.ACCEPT message class 531. Likewise, Form "B" is registered to handle the IPM.NOTE message class 532. The registry 530 may be a part of the operating system.

Briefly stated, in operation, mail application 240 determines the appropriate form to instantiate by first locating class property 510 and identifying the message class. Mail application 240 then queries the registry 530 to determine which form is registered to handle the identified message class. Mail application 240 then instantiates the registered form 550 and passes to it the message data.

In the event the message class does not have a registered form, a default form is utilized. For example, IPM.NOTE form handler 532. The default form allows messages received in unregistered forms to be received by the message system and therefore displayed to the user.

FIGURE 6 is a logical flow diagram generally illustrating a process for accessing a registry to identify the proper form to handle a message class. In describing FIGURE 6, reference is made to the system described in conjunction with FIGURES 2 and 5. Method 600 enters at starting block 601, where message data typically is already available, such as, for example, at transport component 230 or stored within the data store 220.

The process begins at block 603 where, for example, one or more components, such as the transport component 230, notifies mail application 240 that the component has message data to pass to a message form 250. At block 605, the mail application 240 retrieves the class property 510 from the message data, as described above in conjunction with FIGURE 5.

At block 607, mail application 240 accesses the registry 530 to identify the appropriate message form 550 registered to handle the message class. In the event there is not a form registered to handle the identified message class, the registry may identify a default form handler to mail application 240.

At block 609, mail application 240 invokes the identified form 550. At block 611, mail application 240 passes the message properties to the message form 250 using a standard interface, as described above. At block 615, processing ends. At this point the message data has been passed to the appropriate message form 250. It should be noted that this process may be used by any component in the messaging system 200 that communicates with mail application 240, and requires a form 550.

The above specification, examples and data provide a complete description of the manufacture and use of the composition of the invention. Since many embodiments of the invention can be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention, the invention resides in the claims hereinafter appended.